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NEWS

Doug Ford's New COVID-19 Budget Plans to Spend Nearly \$100 Million Less On Long-Term Care

Ontario budgets \$93 million less for long-term care than it did earlier this year in response to the pandemic

by **PressProgress**

November 6, 2020

Despite an ongoing global pandemic and deadly outbreaks at long-term care homes across Ontario, Doug Ford is eyeing long-term care as one line-item where his government can save money.

According to Ontario's newly released [2020 budget](https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/pdf/2020-ontario-budget-en.pdf) (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/pdf/2020-ontario-budget-en.pdf>), Ford's government is planning nearly \$100 million less in spending on long-term care than it proposed in March.



Details were announced late Thursday in a budget that proposes \$4.535 billion in “total” funding (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/pdf/2020-ontario-budget-en.pdf>) for long-term care. (<https://pressprogress.ca>)

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Long-Term Care (Total)	4,163	4,329	4,423	4,535.8
Municipal Affairs and Housing (Base)	417	475	541	481.7
Safe Restart Agreement	–	–	–	1,900.0
Time-Limited Investments	559	636	317	255.8
Social Housing Agreement – Payments to Service Managers ¹¹	392	367	341	315.2

November 2020 Ontario Budget

While that amount may appear to be up from the government’s 2019 budget, which allocated \$4.441 billion for long-term care spending, it is actually down from funding levels allocated by Finance Minister Rod Phillips at the beginning of the pandemic.

In his March 2020 fiscal and economic update, titled “responding to COVID-19,” Phillips announced the province planned to increase spending (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/marchupdate/pdf/2020-marchupdate.pdf>) on long-term care to \$4.628 billion.

Long-Term Care (Total)	4,163	4,329	4,441	4,628.4
Municipal Affairs and Housing (Base)	417	475	479	481.7
Time-Limited Investments	559	636	315	226.2
Social Housing Agreement – Payments to Service Managers ¹⁰	392	367	341	315.2

March 2020 economic and fiscal update

The difference between Phillip’s March 2020 pledge and November 2020 budget amounts to \$93 million.

The new budget also includes revised figures showing the Ford government spent \$18 million less on long-term care in 2019 than it originally planned to spend.

Despite this, Phillips suggested in a news release (<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/59065/ontarios-action-plan-protect-support-recover>) that Ford’s government is going above and beyond to keep people safe in long-term care homes.



are making available every necessary resource to keep people safe, including our loved ones in long-term care and our frontline health care heroes during the second wave and beyond," Phillips is quoted saying in the news release .

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Long-term care residents have seen the highest mortality rates (<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-long-term-care-connected-to-79-per-cent-of-covid-19-deaths-in-canada/>) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April, SEIU Healthcare (<https://seiuhealthcare.ca/seiu-healthcare-secures-greater-protections-for-workers/>) and the Ontario Nurses Association (<https://www.ona.org/news-posts/ona-wins-ltc/>) secured orders against a number of private long-term care homes hard-hit by the pandemic where health workers say management did not adequately respond.

In a decision (<https://pressprogress.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OLRB-Decision-April-24-2020.pdf>), the Ontario Labour Relations Board agreed private long-term care providers were not following workplace health and safety protocols, providing personal protective equipment or ensuring adequate staffing capacity.

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